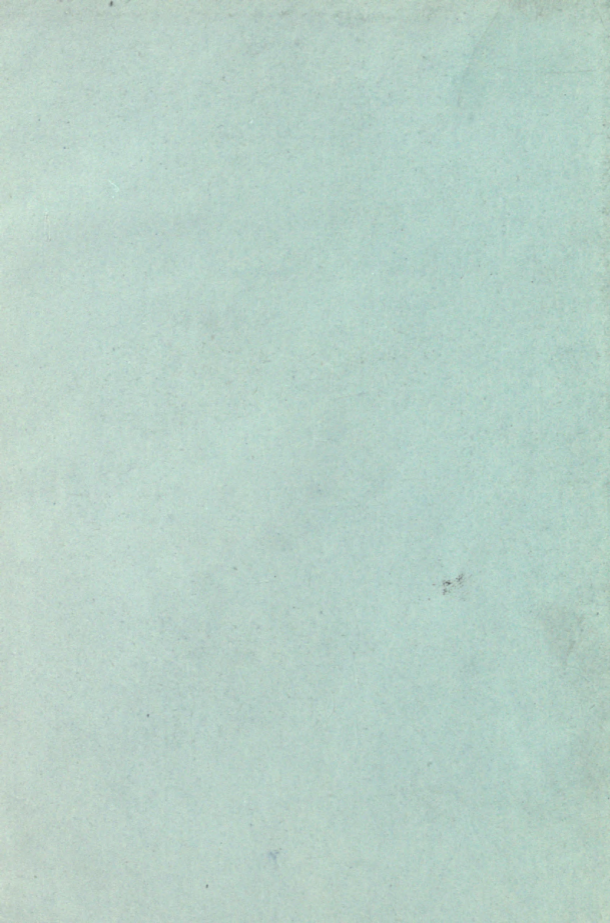


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THE
MAID OF ORLEANS

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY

BY
GEORGE H. CALVERT

NEW YORK
G. P. Putnam's Sons
1874

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PERSONS REPRESENTED.

CHARLES VII., *King of France.*

THE MAID OF ORLEANS.

DUKE OF ALENÇON,
DUKE OF VENDOME, } *Royal Dukes.*
DUCHESS OF ALENÇON, AND DAUGHTER.

COUNTESS OF LIGNY, AND DAUGHTER.

COUNT DUNOIS, BASTARD OF ORLEANS.

COUNT OF ARMAGNAC,

COUNT GAUCOURT,

LA HIRE,

COARAZE.

SAINTRAILLES,

BAUDRICOURT,

SIR BERTRAND DE POUSENGIS.

ROYAL DUKE OF BEDFORD, *English Viceroy in France.*

LORD TALBOT,

LORD SUFFOLK,

SIR WILLIAM BLUNT, } *English Commanders.*

SIR HERBERT HAMPTON,

SIR HENRY CLIFFORD,

CARDINAL WINCHESTER.

ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS.

BISHOP OF BEAUVAIS.

ASSESSORS.

OYSELEUR.

BROTHERS ISAMBART AND MARTIN.

FATHER, MOTHER, UNCLE, BROTHER, *of the Maid.*

TWO GENTLEMEN.

Priests, Knights, Sergeants, Heralds, Citizens, Soldiers.

SCENE: *France in the Fifteenth Century.*

THE MAID OF ORLEANS.

—◆—
ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Royal Residence at Chinon.

THE COUNT OF ARMAGNAC, LA HIRE.

ARMAGNAC.

Is't true that Talbot's with the curst besiegers?

LA HIRE.

That it is true sharpens my daily pang
For the besieged, the steadfast Orleanese.

ARMAGNAC.

La Hire, to you I speak as friend to friend:
This King doth sorely try a proud allegiance:
That mine will bear the strain I cannot say.
Allegiance voucheth vigor to command.
Who would swear fealty to impotence?

Can vassal bend the knee to lifeless lord?
France bristles with perverse hostilities,
Rebellions, feuds, invasions, sieges fierce;
The whole land quakes with war's mad violations;
The whole, save him round whom, for whom, 'gainst
whom

This bloody evolution boils and flares;
And he lolls stagnant on a lazy couch.
Did we not see it, who'd believe 'tis so?
Had one reported that but yesterday,
On riding through the forest in a storm,
He'd seen branch, bough and spray and leaf betossed
Tumultuous by a sudden tempest's rage,
All bending, shrieking, flying 'fore the wind,
All save one oak, the tallest of the throng,
And he stood motionless 'mid the loud whirl,
No sign of writhing vigor in his limbs, —
I should have wondered first, and then exclaimed,
That oak is dead, and doth usurp the room
Which should resound with living roots and trunk.

LA HIRE.

Par Dieu, my noble earl of Armagnac,
You utter not your feeling only, nor
Just yours and mine. All of our nobles here
Suffer as you do; nay, nor gentleman

Nor man upon this sorely smitten soil,
Who feels a Frenchman throb within his breast,
But shames him for the royal apathy,
This heart-paralysis of France's power.
Here comes Vendome, fresh from his Majesty.

Enter VENDOME.

Well, Duke, what are our cheeks to blush for next?

VENDOME.

Mine blush no more : they pale with anger now.
We're all the victims of imbecile fears.
There are no Talbots, Salisburys, Bedfords, Henrys ;
There is no starving Orleans close besieged.
The King — and who should know if he does not —
Talks cheerful by the hour and names them not.
Good God ! that our dear France should be so —
Where is this martial damsel from Lorraine,
The people whisper of so hopefully?
Naught but a woman can arouse this sluggard.
Out of his weakness we may build a strength.

LA HIRE.

This rumor from Lorraine is in fulfillment
Of ancient prophecies ; and prophecies
Themselves oft speed their own accomplishment.

VENDOME.

With such a helmsman, naught but miracle
Can save us from being quickly overborne
By hateful flood of English conquerors.

[Exeunt severally.]

SCENE II.

On the edge of the forest of Domremy, near a fountain.

THE MAID (*on her knees*).

DIVINE ye must be, or ye would not speak
Through loved seraphic figures clothed in light :
Beings so beautiful come straight from heaven.
The many years I've heard ye, yet, each hearing
Thrills me with deeper awe. My life is changed.
By your celestial tune I have been won
Afar from this to live in the great thoughts
You have awakened, and from year to year
So nursed, they've filled me with a mighty future.
Joan, O Joan! can it be? — Ha! there they are!

VOICE (*from above*).

Joan, chosen wast thou for thy aptness. Blest

Above all maidens is thy peerless portion --
To be the savior of thy country, wreckt
But for thy pilotage. The time is come.
Go to Sir Baudricourt at Vaucouleurs.
He to the King will send thee, and the King
Cohorts will marshal under thee, the siege
To raise of Orleans. Thence thou'lt bring the King
To Rheims, there to be crowned: and France is saved.

[The MAID falls prostrate on the ground.]

Enter the MAID'S MOTHER, not perceiving JOAN.

MOTHER.

Poor Joan! they are seeking her to drive her into marriage. Such matches should not be. Mismatches we have too many, even where the will goes with them. Against the will, they're of the Devil. But Joan will not yield; and then her father storms, and we all bend before his rage, excepting Joan. In common things you'd think she had no will, docile as is my wheel unto my hand. A strange dear child it is: where can she be?

Enter JOAN'S FATHER, with her lover and the CURATE.

FATHER.

Where is Joan?

MOTHER.

Ha! there she is on the ground. Joan! Joan!

[*The MAID raises herself on her knees.*

My dear child! I feared thou had'st been struck by lightning.

MAID.

Mother, the sky is clear of clouds. A light, Brighter than lightning, streamed but now before me.

FATHER (*coming forward*).

Again these foolish visions. Joan, thou wast always dutiful: now thou troublest thy father's peace. How is it thou art suddenly so dogged? Obey thy parents: we know best what is for thy good: we wish thee well married; and here is Oliver, worthy of thee, and has some claim on thee.

MAID (*rising*).

Dares he to say he has a claim on me?

OLIVER (*coming forward*).

Is not my love a claim, a love as strong
As ever warmed the breast of man for woman?

MAID.

I told thee 'twas in vain: it could not be.

FATHER.

I say, it shall be. What are we come to? Shall green, unfurnished girls cry yea or nay against their parents' plans? Make thee ready to be wedded to Oliver.

MAID.

Father, it cannot be : it must not be.

FATHER.

Darest thou disobey thy father's will?

MAID.

I have two fathers : which shall I obey?
My earthly or my Heavenly Father's will?
My Heavenly Father —

CURATE.

Joan, that will not stead thee :
Thy Heavenly Father speaks to thee through me.

MAID.

When thou'rt not by, can He not come to me?
Is his will reined by thee, or thine by Him?

CURATE.

How dost thou know if He does speak to thee?

MAID.

By twice the craft I know when thou dost speak ;
By outward, and by inward finer sense.
The world, is't not by unseen power governed ?
Power is nowhere but in the invisible.
All else is only plastic instrument.

FATHER.

Joan, thou hast lost thy wits. What know'st thou of
these high things ? A senseless tingling in thy ears
thou tak'st for angel voices.

CURATE.

Leave her to me. I'll find a happy hour
To exorcise the Devil who now sits
Master of spell-bound fancy in her brain.

FATHER.

Come, Oliver. She'll recover under the Curate's doc-
toring : you'll have her better-minded in a week.

[*Exeunt* FATHER, CURATE, and OLIVER.]

MOTHER.

O Joan, my child, my dearest child, wherefor
Art thou so rooted in thy willfulness ?

MAID.

Mother, I cannot otherwise. The things
I have been used to, grow unwonted to me.
My life is other than it was : 'tis now
In new, great thoughts, deeds greater, that so fill,
So swell my being, myself I know no more.
A higher self I am, the servitor
Of angels.

MOTHER.

O my child, how canst thou know ?
The Curate says, they are temptations, speech
Feigned by the Devil, these thy saintly voices.

MAID.

Mother, how can he know ? He has not heard them.
Heard them have I ; the heads, woven of light,
Have seen, whence issue their profound commands.
Limits, God-planted, are there to disguise.
Uplifting thoughts the Devil never prompts,
Nor whets th' exalted soul to sacrifice.
He moves us love ourselves, our lustful wants ;
He tells where hidden treasure may be dug,
Or flatters us with sensual heritage.
Our souls, dear mother, are not of the Devil :
Mine meets these voices with an answering glow,
Lifts it to them with liveliest, warmest trust.

Within the best and deepest of my soul
I feel, they come from God, are tuned to good.

MOTHER.

Thy looks, thy words, proclaim thee child no more :
Thou'rt shot up to ripe woman in a day.

Enter the MAID'S UNCLE.

UNCLE.

What is't I hear? They'd wed thee 'gainst thy will?

MAID.

Dear uncle, that they must not, cannot do.
But I'm rejoiced you're come. To Vaucouleurs
I must at once.

UNCLE.

Again thou'st heard them speak?

MAID.

Within an hour ; and hence I go to-day.
And thou'll go with me ?

UNCLE.

That I will, dear Joan.
Thy voices speak to me through thee. In them
I trust, because I've faith in thee.

MOTHER.

Brother,
The Curate says they're from the Devil.

UNCLE.

Sister,
Curates are not infallible. The promptings
Of a sound heart, pure, innocent like hers,
With heavenly will are more in unison,
Than the dry hackneyed say of thousand curates.
Most priestly words are too mechanical,
Too emptied of the freer life, that they
Should carry messages from the upper realms.
Come, Joan ; 'tis two leagues hence to Little Bury,
And I would be at home ere set of sun.

MAID.

Mother, O mother ! I must leave thee ; yea,
I must ; must quit my home, my dear, dear home.
These trees, this fountain, and my church, — the church
Which is another daily home to me, —
My flocks and meadows, and my happy comrades, —
All, all I leave forever. Ha ! Forever ? —
My brain seems trampled on by marching legions :
Plainly as ere I heard thy tender voice,
I hear the blows and cries of battling hosts :

Now shouts of victory ; now silent joy ;
Now shadows come : they pass away : again
The clash of arms : now, what a jubilee.
More shadows — more, and deeper — black, how black !
They fold me in ! There, there, they break again.
O what a splendor ! what a glory ! Where,
Where am I ? — Mother ! come, mother !

[*Exeunt ; the MAID, with an arm round her MOTHER'S neck.*]

SCENE III.

*Vaucouleurs. Head-quarters of the Military Com-
mander, Sir Baudricourt.*

SIR BAUDRICOURT, *two officers, and* SIR BERTRAND DE POU-
ENGIS, *a friend of* SIR B.

SIR BERTRAND.

Captain, I fear to ask of news from Orleans.

SIR BAUDRICOURT.

Deep hearts have they, those manful Orleanese,
That from them they can still dip drops of hope.
Beleaguered, mined, bombarded, starved, and stormed,
They yield them not, but supplicate for aid,
Which never comes.

SIR BERTRAND.

Whence can it come? The King
Has neither men nor means ; his chiefs rebellious,
Allies faithless ; and as his enemies
Grow hot, his friend of Burgundy grows cool.

SIR BAUDRICOURT.

Shrewd Burgundy goes ever with the strongest ;
And that might we be had our King a will.
A thoughtful, earnest will creates its means ;
Kindles the cold, quickens the slow, spurs all.
Armed men start from the earth at hearted cry ;
Obedience follows will with votive smiles,
And allies troop to its side with eager trust.
But indolence, though regal, hath no will ;
And from its rotting couch of luxury
Looseness crawls forth upon the hapless land,
Where nothing holds together, naught is tight
And practicable ; and the nation sways
From side to side, like to a drunken man,
Whose limbs cannot obey a staggering mind.

SIR BERTRAND.

The people hereabout have nursed a rumor,
Which was but vague and unregarded thin,
Till wide despair hath fed it into plumpness :

A prophecy of Merlin, — that should spring
From rich Lorraine a maid to save dear France.

SIR BAUDRICOURT.

We must be near to drowning when we catch
At mouldy straws.

SIR BERTRAND.

Good friend, this air we breathe
Is the same air that ancient Merlin breathed,
Fed by the earth and sun, same earth and sun
That feed it now for us. Upon this air
Not bodies only but our souls are kept,
Inbreathing aye a subtler, wiser life
Than that which arms our eye to conquer space.
Hereby so is our being interfused
With the divine, that from the Source of all
Monitions come, that make some natures prescient.

Enter an ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

Here is a peasant, sir, who begs to see you.

SIR BAUDRICOURT.

Admit him.

Enter the MAID'S UNCLE.

What's your want?

UNCLE.

Sir Baudricourt,

My niece, a peasant girl from Domremy,
A pious, gentle child, hath, sir, a message
She would herself deliver to your ear.

SIR BAUDRICOURT.

Know you its purport, and from whom it is?

UNCLE.

The girl, sir, talks and looks and bears herself
Like one inspired. For several years, she says,
She has heard voices, seen at times the forms
Of th' angels whence they issued. Yesterday
They told her she's to be her country's savior —

SIR BAUDRICOURT.

Sir Bertrand, here's old Merlin's Lorraine lady.

SIR BERTRAND.

Depend on't, this is something more than strange.

UNCLE.

They ordered her to come at once to you ;
They said that you would send her to the King,
The King would give her men to raise the siege
Of Orleans ; thence to Rheims, there to be crowned.

SIR BERTRAND.

What is the daily humor of her life ?

UNCLE.

A sheer exalted self-forgetfulness.
So modest, all her doing is obedience,
Now to her angel-voices, as before
To father, mother, and the parish priest ;
All ardent impulses so clean of self,
Her hourly life seems but a supplement
To other lives ; her office helpfulness.
Pardon me, sir ; from the dear child I've caught
Some of the glow of rapture.

SIR BERTRAND.

Is she here

In Vaucouleurs ?

UNCLE.

She is. 'Tis not an hour
I left her weeping, wringing of her hands,

Because, she says, to-day, this very noon,
The French are beaten in a fight near Orleans.

SIR BERTRAND (*taking out his tablets*).

The first, is't not, Sir Robert?

SIR BAUDRICOURT.

Aye, of April.

Good man, take back your niece to Domremy.
Hard work on bread and water is a cure,
The surest she can have for her disease.
Sometimes such cracks i'th' brain are through the back
Most quickly mended. Flagellation's smart
Works wonders.

SIR BERTRAND.

Come, bring me to this maid.

[*Exeunt* SIR BERTRAND and UNCLE.]

SCENE IV.

Public Square at Orleans.

Men, women, children, sad, haggard, poorly dressed, some ragged.

At the corner of the stage, a bureau for giving out rations.

WOMAN (*with basket or kettle, to the man serving in the bureau*). Is that all you can give me to-day? I had but half allowance yesterday.

BUREAU. Our stock is low, grows daily less and less, and no hope for more.

WOMAN. My two boys, one sixteen, the other fourteen, are on the walls, doing the duty of men.

1ST CITIZEN (*to the bureau*). Give her half of my share: such a mother must not starve.

WOMAN. May God bless you and your children. (*The man of the bureau gives her more.*) This will go to double the strength of my soldier sons.

Enter a Soldier.

1ST CITIZEN. What news bring'st thou?

SOLDIER. Bad news: more English are coming.

1ST CIT. And no French? Where is the King?

2D CIT. The King is no king: his seat is not the throne, but the lap of a mistress.

1ST CIT. If no succor comes, soon, we must starve or surrender.

YOUNG WOMAN (*with infant in her arms, coming forward*). Surrender! Rather than that thy sweet rosy flesh shall shrink upon thy bones, and thou grow pale and cold, clinging to my milkless breast. Ha! he smiles and looks to heaven. Thou shalt not die: thou shalt live, to fight for France.

SOLDIER. Strange rumors there are of a Maid who is to be the savior of Orleans.

YOUNG WOMAN. Who has seen her? Whence comes she?

1ST CIT. From Heaven she must come; for the earth and all who are on it have abandoned us.

Enter a Citizen in haste.

CITIZEN. To the walls! To the walls! The enemy are advancing on the west.

1ST CITIZEN. To arms! to arms! A moment since I was ripe for cold despair. The battling English re-warm my heart. Away with despondency! Come, comrades! We'll woo the King with our courage. From the blood we sow to-day we shall reap succor next week. Succor must come; it must. On, then, comrades, once more to the walls! Beat back the enemy, and then over his head we will look jubilant from our ramparts far away upon France, and hope.

[*Exit, followed by citizens shouting "To the walls! to the walls!"*]

SCENE V.

*Vaucouleurs.**Head-quarters of Sir Baudricourt.*

SIR BAUDRICOURT *and two officers.* *To them enter* SIR BERTRAND DE POUSENGIS.

SIR BERTRAND.

Again I come, Sir Baudricourt, to pray,
Admit this maid for one brief interview.

SIR BAUDRICOURT.

What will it boot? A question this of faith,
Of naught but faith. A sheer impertinence
Is she to one who can't believe in her.
It irks me, friend, to hear her even named ;
The sight of her would anger me, extort
Rude speech, belike, such as a gentleman
Forbids his tongue when speaking to a woman.

SIR BERTRAND.

When first she came she was, to fullest heads
An insolence, to most a disbelief.
Within a short two weeks she's won them all ;

Won them, not by performing miracles,
But by the wonder of her daily life,
So simple, pure, and freshly serviceable,
It cleanses thought to see and hear and know her.

Enter the MAID, suddenly.

SIR BAUDRICOURT.

What ho ! my sentinels !

MAID.

Nor sentinels,
Nor your strong bent can stay me. Keys I bear
To unlock your closest orders.

SIR BAUDRICOURT.

Officers,
Do you the duty those false watchmen weak
Have failed to do.

*[The two officers approach to seize her. She waves them back,
they pause.]*

By Heaven ! I'll break this charm.

MAID.

'Tis not a charm, Sir Baudricourt. Wherefor
To me hath fallen this signal part I know not.

It saddens me more than it cheers. Obey
I must what is above me. So, yourself.
You speak and act from what to you doth seem
Pure self-impulsion ; but there is behind
That impulse what is its far primal fount,
A might unseen, which all your motions moves.
Life, death, can you control them, you or I?
And yet they are controlled. Your instruments
You choose : shall God not choose his own? By men
The world seems ruled : men are his instruments.
The best, the freest human instruments
Are they who on themselves think least, and burn
The self to fuel flames shall light the way
To fertile principles, deep truths, great causes.
Pardon me ; I am startled at myself,
My speech. I know me not. This friendly ground
Scarce do I feel its pressure on my sole.
I seem to skim the earth, to tread on air,
Borne lightly forward by a will not mine,
Which you nor I nor any one can baffle.

*Enter in haste a booted, spattered courier, and gives a package to SIR
BAUDRICOURT, who hurriedly opens it.*

SIR BAUDRICOURT.

The King hath lost another battle.

SIR BERTRAND.

When?

SIR BAUDRICOURT.

At noon the first of April. What of that?

SIR BERTRAND.

Have you forgotten how this maiden's uncle,
The day he came to beg an interview,
'Told she was weeping then for battle lost?

SIR BAUDRICOURT.

Aye, aye, I do remember ; and you set
The date upon your tablets. What tell they?

SIR BERTRAND.

Whate'er they tell is from my memory gone,
But they will give full echo of that hour.
Read their report.

[Takes out his tablets and gives them.

SIR BAUDRICOURT (*reads*).

"At noon the first of April."

"Tis strange!

SIR BERTRAND.

The air can carry messages

Swifter than e'en a royal estafette.
My friend, man's fullest knowledge is as yet
Small fraction fine of what there is to draw
From the deep quarries of the universe,
The happy harvestings of rich futurity.

SIR BAUDRICOURT.

Further: the King bids me send him the maid.

MAID.

Send me at once. Dear Orleans is in tears.
The ruthless English close their claws upon her.
France is impatient to be saved.

SIR BERTRAND.

High maid,
Myself and the good knight of Novelompont,
Each with a trusty squire, we are to be
Your escort and your guard. The way is long,
And rough with dangers.

MAID.

Brave Sir Bertrand, thou
Art one of those elected happiest men
Who list to suck their sap from virtuous deeds.
But, for the dangers of our coming journey,

Give them no heed. They who commissioned me
To this momentous work, hold in their hands
Enough continuous pliant threads of life
To steer us through this angry labyrinth.
Let me be gone at once, Sir Baudricourt.
Minutes weigh upon France like heaviest hours,
So sleepless is the time with desolation.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The Royal Residence at Chinon.

King CHARLES VII., the royal Dukes of ALENÇON and of VENDOME, Count DUNOIS, bastard of Orleans, the Counts of ARMAGNAC and of GAUCOURT, LA HIRE, BERTRAND DE POUSENGIS.

KING.

I KNOW not, gentlemen, that I can put
The purpose of this Council into words,
And stay a smile from pertly wheeling them
From dutiful intent of seriousness.
The question is, shall we admit to-day,
As active party to our consultation
On plans of war and policy, a girl,
That girl a peasantess, untutored, raw ;
But still, a girl who makes pretension to
Angelic guidance, and hath won the heart,
Not solely of the ruder multitude,
But sundry of the wisest men and women.

ALENÇON.

My Liege, for one, were I disposed to smile,
The guardian Angels of our France (if they
Have not upflown to Heaven, deserting us,
Wrath-lifted at our mad self-immolation),
They, if they hover near, would with a blow,
Aye, with a blow from their invisible hands,
Smash on my lips such smile, — a smile sardonic,
While prostrate France gasps forth ensanguined groans.
My Liege, lest something come to save us soon,
We're lost, and must flee toward our southern coast,
Flight ignominious, self-destructive, base.
Admit this Maid : hear what she has to say :
Hope springs fresh fountains in extremity.

DUNOIS.

Your Majesty, the Duke of Alençon
Thickens the blackness of the time o'ermuch.
Methinks, gross as it is, unblenching swords
Can cut a path to clearer distances.

ALENÇON.

Can Count Dunois hew him a track to Orleans
Through th' English legions that enfold and clutch
That sparkling royal gem ; and thus re-earn
The lofty title that he wears ?

DUNOIS.

Most true,
Orleans is our last hope. Give me the men,
And I will pledge me here to raise its siege.

ALENÇON.

Ha! whence will swarm the needed men? for French-
men,
Brave as they are, can't fight unfed, unclad.

GAUCOURT.

I have no faith, my Liege, in women-warriors.
But let us see this Maid. She's beautiful,
'Tis said; and beauty fires a Frenchman's heart.

ARMAGNAC.

Your Majesty, here is a gentleman,
Sir Bertrand de Pousengis, who can tell,
It may be, something of this peasant girl.

KING.

Sir Bertrand, speak what you have learnt or know.

SIR BERTRAND.

Your Majesty, this Maid of Domremy
I have escorted all the perilous way

From Vaucouleurs, enlisted by my faith, —
A faith, born when I first beheld her there,
Fed daily by the beaming saintliness
Of a demeanor, where a manlike force
So quickened maiden tenderness, all hearts
Were boldened by a wise activity,
Her words and deeds falling upon the people
A showered benediction from above.
Amid the city's heated stir she shone
Modest as moon new-hung in cloud-flecked sky.
This fortnight past, threading the forest paths, —
Which had been weary both and dangerous,
But for the constant light of her fair aspect
And the sure prescience of her dispositions, —
She was the guardian of her harnessed guards,
The comforter of th' oft discouraged escort.
I claim some knowledge of the wondrous Maid.
Through tangled travel was I at her side
By day and night. I see a sudden smile,
My lords, brighten your bronzed visages ;
But know, that to my thought, not revered child,
Nor sister sacred, nor soul's image of
Divine perfection, could be flanked about
By firmer rampart of high chastity,
Than this poor peasant girl of Domremy,
Her citadel an inward heavenliness.

I vow myself her servant knight, almost
I'd said her worshipper, so good she is,
So wise, so pure, so true.

KING.

By Heaven, Sir Bertrand,
You are a noble, chivalrous gentleman.
Go bring your wondrous maiden to our presence.

[Exit SIR BERTRAND.

Dunois, take you my seat.

[The KING descends from the throne, and DUNOIS seats himself thereon.

She knows us not :
We'll try her promptly at her first approach.

GAUCOURT.

Give her such shriving drench, my lord Dunois,
That she shall need confessor never more.

DUNOIS.

If her bragged angels be not forced to lay
Their plumeless pinions drooping at my feet,
And she to offer penance for her fraud,
May I ne'er hark for bugle blast again.

Reënter SIR BERTRAND with the MAID.

Well, Shepherdess, what is your will with me?

MAID.

Not unto you, Bastard of Orleans, is
My homage owed. My Liege is here.

[*Kneeling before the KING.*

Great King,

By that mysterious Wisdom which, through depths, —
To a frail mortal ken unfathomable, —
Chooses its instruments at times among
The lowliest born, to you I'm sent that I
Be your chief servant in extremity,
Ordered, empowered, to raise the siege of Orleans,
And then to lead you to be crowned at Rheims.

KING.

You speak not like a rustic peasant girl.

MAID.

I am a rustic peasant girl no more.
Why me and not another they have sent
At this distressful moment, that I know not.
Of God's true purposes (in fostering which
He useth angels, who in turn use us)
Only by inward watch upon ourselves,
And honest outward look, can we learn aught,
Becoming quicker, better learners we,
The deeper is our childlike innocence;

For as with light He permeates the air,
So does He interfuse with finer beam
The souls of men clean passive to his will.

[As the MAID in speaking these lines becomes rapt, looking upward, the KING steps a little back from her in astonishment and admiration. Some of the lords do the same

KING.

Your words are higher than I'm wont to hear.
That you by instinct knew Dunois and me,
Is much ; but I would hold a subtler proof
Of the supernal friends you claim to have.

MAID.

Your Majesty shall be full satisfied.
First bid these gentlemen to stand aloof.

[The KING and MAID go to one side, the lords to the other.

ARMAGNAC.

So many are the sins he hath to score,
'Twill easy be to guess at one or two.

DUNOIS.

See, see : the King is startled — turneth pale.
She plies him further : why, he looks subdued.

VENDOME.

He is by far too much subdued already.
If she'll put life and courage into him,
I shall believe she is by angels backed.

KING (*coming forward*).

This Maid hath plucked a secret from my heart,
A secret, guarded with such lively watch,
It never had been breathed to living ear,
Or whispered of by lips until by hers.
It frightens me to think this mystery could
By any one be known except myself.
Strange gifts she hath, more than are natural.
I will consult the Bishops ; they will know.
Meanwhile, Duke Alençon, take charge of her ;
And treat her as becomes your dignity.

[*Exeunt* KING and lords, *except* ALENÇON and SIR BERTRAND.

ALENÇON.

Lieutenant, conduct her to my quarters. Say
To the Duchess, I commend to kindest care
This Maid. (*To the MAID.*) In her already you've a
friend.

[*Exit* MAID *with* Lieutenant.

Delay, delay ; ever a putting off.
Thriftless postponement is the kingly home,
His petted palace, rounded with the soft

And perfumed pillows of luxuriousness.
His acts of kingly duty and renown
Are in a future which he never grasps,
'That virtuous time aye smothered in his sloth.
And hence the wreck of France ; for war's success
With lazy laggardness is conjugal,
As stealthy darkness with ingenuous day.

SIR BERTRAND.

That lordly France should be so buffeted !
Dear bleeding France, pale with the loss of drops
That redden lifted arms of enemies.
Yet Orleans must be quick relieved.

ALENÇON.

By whom ?

The King hath lost the power to command ;
His captains loyal temper to obey ;
And the poor, trampled, scourged, abandoned people,
All confidence in both, all faith, all hope.
Bloody destruction glares upon the kingdom,
Croaking malicious at our helplessness.

SIR BERTRAND.

Pardon, Duke Alençon ; I'll comfort you.
Were Vaucouleurs, where she abode a fortnight,
But a league hence, you'd see her compassed round

By men armed to the teeth, each at his cost,
So did she swell all hearts with forward zeal,
Blow into them her martial spirit's breath.
And thus 'twill soon be here. She's a born leader, —
And more than that.

ALENÇON.

Then France may yet be saved.
Transcendent breath at times so breathes its life
Into selected soul, from this new might
Men courage gather, as from impulses
Inflamed by a descended God.

[*Ex. unt.*

SCENE II.

Residence of the Duke of Alençon, at Chinon.

The DUCHESS OF ALENÇON and her daughter EMILY, aged fifteen

EMILY.

Mother, why does she keep away so long?

DUCHESS.

She undergoes sharp trial now at Poitiers,
By hoary councilors and priests, to learn
Whether she be from God or th' evil one.

EMILY.

Mother, she cannot be from th' evil one :
I never feel so good as when with her.

DUCHESS.

Surer than all this conclave's cognizance
Is that as voucher for a pedigree.
If thy pure pulses be still purified
By her strong breathing, she must be from heaven,
Aye, and from heaven's most heavenly circles sent.
Methinks some women interspersed could piece
The Council's judgment out to sounder wholeness :
Some succor from her peers this Maid should have.

EMILY.

From Poictiers yesterday there was no courier :
Is't not a sign that father's coming home ?

DUCHESS.

Ha ! here he is.

Enter the DUKE OF ALENÇON.

And good news on his face.

ALENÇON.

The best : she's cleared. The Council has pronounced,
Swayed by the King and people. As 'twas here,

So too at Poitiers : her great heart enclasps,
Enfoldeth, melts all hearts, men, women, children,
All warmly won ; as though the puissant air
Were suddenly inflammable, and she
A torch, that where she comes it flameth wide,
Thawing the frozen courage of the land,
Giving impetuous motions as of old.
Men are all soul ; forget their bodies ; weep
With Frenchmen's joy. The King, even the lords,
The skeptic lords, eye her with admiration.
Soldiers pour in : she leads a freshened force
To Orleans. What a sight to see her, armed
Like manliest knight, govern exulting steed,
And wind him with such sway, as she sat there
To teach bold chivalry its horsemanship ;
My look so dazzled that I seemed to see
An image almost of the Virgin self,
Descended on a cloud rainful of pity,
To claim anew obediences and law ;
As though men's governance had failed on earth,
And woman would re cleanse infected power.
She gives commands as she'd ne'er done aught else.
Good-will and zeal and courage rule afresh
In all men's hearts. She starts to-day, this hour.

EMILY.

O father, shall I not see her again ?

ALENCON.

Thou shalt. By me she sends thy mother word,
 She'll stop to bid good-by. Thou'lt hardly know her,
 Attended as she is with martial suite
 Of heralds, squire and chaplain. Here she is.

*Enter the MAID, in silver armor and helmet, a banner in her hand,
 with sword and curtle-axe on either side, followed by two heralds,
 a squire, and a chaplain.*

DUCHESS.

Dear Maid, how shall I greet thee?

MAID.

As the mother

Thou'st been to me.

[They warmly embrace.]

O, thou hast made me feel
 As I had here regained my own dear mother ;
 And thou (*to EMILY*) a dearest sister found anew.

[Embraces her.]

Now I might linger here, to feed my heart
 On daily home-brewed sweetness of affection,
 Soothing me in the lap of tenderness.
 But woman-happinesses are not mine.

[She gently unlinks herself from their embrace.]

War, war! Blood, blood! There is no other way.
God's will be done: I am an instrument.
And noble Duke, my hearty thanks to you.
We'll meet again ere long, and side by side,
Upon the battle field. Farewell! Farewell!
Now must I weep at carnage which I cause:
It is my destiny, my duty's best.
In the brief silent respites from war's 'larums,
Dear memories will waft me to my home
In far Domremy, halting on the way
At Chinon here, to fondle and to thank you.
Farewell!

[EMILY runs to her and embraces her passionately.

My blessing on you. On, to Orleans.

[Exit.

SCENE III.

Public Square in Orleans, in front of a church.

Enter several Citizens, much elated.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Who would have believed it? The English made no stir to balk her entrance.

SECOND CITIZEN.

As she marched by, they looked on spell-bound, as if rooted in the earth, rigid as statues. Their chiefs, Talbot and Suffolk, feared to bid them attack, lest they should disobey, or worse than that, be panic-stricken. This I heard just now from a brave Champagnee, who deserted from them but an hour ago.

Enter an OLD MAN.

OLD MAN.

Now I'm content to die: Orleans is saved, saved by an angel in woman's shape, sent down from heaven. The old prophecy is about to be fulfilled.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Uncle, were you near enough to see her well?

OLD MAN.

I was afraid of the crowd, and so I waited at the treasurer's gate, where I knew she was to alight. The smile she gave me as I half knelt to her! 'twill add a year unto my life.

SECOND CITIZEN.

The close-packed multitude sobbed for joy. Who

ever knew me weep, before to-day? I needn't be ashamed of it, for I saw a big drop steal down the sun-burnt cheek of La Hire.

FIRST CITIZEN.

And as she passed St. Ambrose Church she reined her steed, and bowed her head in prayer.

SECOND CITIZEN.

A poor half-starved woman held up an infant. She stretched over its head her hand and blest it.

THIRD CITIZEN.

The Bastard of Orleans, riding by her side, looked prouder than aye.

SECOND CITIZEN.

He was thinking more of himself than of her.

Enter LA HIRE, at the side with his back to the stage.

LA HIRE.

Halt! Stand at ease!

SOLDIER.

Captain La Hire, is there an alarm?

LA HIRE.

Zounds! — that's the first oath I've sworn for a week. I'm under orders from the Maid never to swear: the abstinence will, I fear, unbrace my sinews. Any alarm? No: I wish there was, I so long to set my two hundred to a charge. They'd now ride down a regiment of English, were every man in it a Talbot. The Maid bade me meet her with my troop here in the public square: what for, I know not. Ha! there's a church: she'll be going to make them charge upon that. Her they'll follow even into a church. The half of them, I'll be sworn, never saw the inside of one, unless as sanctuary after a homicide. Such troopers never sat horse before. Every man of them has the muscle of an ox and the spring of a tiger. I call them fresh veterans, fellows bred to war, but not enrankt for some time past.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Captain La Hire, do you believe in the Maid's visions?

LA HIRE.

I know nothing about visions. A strange power she has: whence it comes I know not. Men she draws to her, and moulds them to her will; whether by help of angels or by force of soul I cannot tell. Even her beauty could not alone do the half she does. She has one great quality, I'm sure of.

FIRST CITIZEN.

What's that?

LA HIRE.

A commander's eye. Great commanders are born,
and rarely born. She'll make no mistakes.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Will the other Captains, Dunois and the rest, obey
her?

LA HIRE.

It goes hard with veteran leaders to submit to be led
by a peasant girl, not out of her teens. But they must
come to it: all our squadrons will obey her against
them.

Enter the MAID, with her chaplain.

MAID.

Ha! my brave Captain, you are here before me.

LA HIRE.

High Maid, I do my duty.

MAID.

France were now
Erect and healthy, strong as any oak,
The stoutest that for centuries hath braved

The tempest on her bleakest mountain side,
Had every noble Frenchman done his duty.
Noble, I say ; for they whose part and place
It is to plan and rule, in peace and war,
Theirs are the weightiest and most sacred duties ;
And France is prostrate, sapped, because her best
And highest have been neither good nor high,
Lacking obedience to command of right,
Selfish, self-seeking, arrogant, and false.
Obedience is the life of prosperous action.
Here it must rule as gravest law of laws,
If Orleans shall be saved.

LA HIRE.

Here is a troop
Will swing a brawny hand at your behest.

MAID (*to the troop*).

My valiant fellow-soldiers, you and I
Must raise this siege and drive these English hence.
Say, can we do it ?

THE TROOP.

Aye, aye ; we can, we will.

MAID.

You'll follow me wherever I shall lead ?

THE TROOP (*with zeal*).

We will, we will.

MAID.

To-morrow then we'll try
The manhood of these forts that threaten us.
And now I go to ask, to pray, for strength,
To Him whence all strength cometh, the Most High.
Go with me and kneel with me side by side.

THE TROOP (*with zeal*).

We will, we will.

MAID.

Good citizens of Orleans,
It is no partial greedy boon we crave ;
Only, that Heaven abet the righteous cause.
The heart draws life from prayerful earnestness.
Prayers that have in them soul enough to mount,
Meet loving answer on their upward flight.
Come with me to the church, and help me pray.
Captain La Hire, bring in your gallant men.

[*As she walks towards the church followed by the citizens,
the curtain drops.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Orleans.

*The MAID, DUNOIS, GAUCOURT, SAINTRAILLES, COARAZE,
LA HIRE.*

MAID.

HAD I given heed to sacred instinct's charge,
I had assailed them yesterday, at once,
Upon our entrance to th' exultant town,
While a great joy fanned courage in our hearts
And unexpectedness had stunned the foe.
I yielded to your wish. To-day I would
See razed the tallest of these English forts.
We need a victory: 'tis a first need,
To hearten us 'gainst long discouragement.
Muster our squadrons at the eastern gate:
'Tis five hours yet to noon.

DUNOIS.

As good to-day,

As yesterday, are the ripe reasons for
Postponement, chief, that we surely await
Strong reinforcement's shout.

MAID.

So the English too ;
And they've had none, while Orleans has, in us.
Quickness is a high multiple in war :
It harbors many virtues in its leap.

GAUCOURT.

Besides, this is the holy Ascension day.

MAID.

Is Count Gaucourt so pious suddenly?
Healthy religion ripens more foodful fruit.
All days are God's: He works on holy days
As other days ; nor doth He Sunday bar
The sun from shining, or the river's flow.
As all the days are God's, so are they man's ;
And he who does good deeds should fear no frown
Our motion's swing, dear life and liberty,
No charter binds but duteous rectitude.
Now to the muster: 'tis a holy war,
France to redeem from vassalage. La Hire,
'Twill be an active day for you.

LA HIRE.

High Maid,

Your orders are my law.

[*Exit the MAID*

GAUCOURT.

Captain La Hire

Ever had eye for a young woman's charms.

She has her will to-day: another day

He'll have his will of her.

LA HIRE.

Well known it is,

Captain Gaucourt has faith in nothing; nay,

Not in himself: therein he may be right;

And sure it was not merit made him Captain.

Let him turn hard suspicion, cynic scorn,

Where they are virtuous aims, — on his own heart.

GAUCOURT.

How dares a brigand hold such speech to me?

LA HIRE.

If Count Gaucourt is better than a brigand,

He hath not shown it yet. The impudence

Of littleness it proves, that he should be

Foremost to grudge this gifted girl her right
Of chieftainship, a right direct from God,
Confirmed by Charles our King.

GAUCOURT.

She may be chief
O'er cut-throats, childish oafs, befooled by faith,
But not o'er me : untutored peasantess !

LA HIRE.

Beware, beware! In times of boiling stress,
Men who have ris'n by Fortune's brazen wrong
Sink out of sight with sudden disappearance,
While Nature's sparkling pets leap to the lead.
Fortune must yield when Nature claims her due.
Come, Saintrailles, our high warrior-Maid awaits us.

[*Exeunt* LA HIRE and SAINTRAILLES.

GAUCOURT.

A warrior-maid ! As if such thing could be.
The eastern gate, said she. That is my post.
I'll hold it shut against a thousand Maids.

COARAZE.

And I'll go help you.

[*Exeunt* GAUCOURT and COARAZE.

DUNOIS (*alone*).

Gentlemen, take care.
You know, I know, naught of this element
You handle new. That she's a power, I know,
A power to wield men's wills, as I my sword.
Myself can scarce withstand her, if I would.
And then far-sighted martial gifts she has,
A military intuition's glance.
As we approached the walls and entered Orleans,
I wondered at the much she saw, some points
My survey had not seized. Now to her side.
If I err not, to-day this maiden's breath
Will be more than a whirlwind's blast to drive
Requicken'd squadrons on these English walls.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Eastern Gate of Orleans.

Sentinels and other Soldiers.

FIRST SOLDIER (*entering in haste*).

Have you heard the good news?

SEVERAL SOLDIERS.

What is it? What is it?

FIRST SOLDIER.

The English fort nearest our gate is to be attacked to-day, at once. They are mustering now. The Maid leads the assault.

SECOND SOLDIER.

Then the fort will be carried. Can any one tell me why, since she's in the town, I feel two hearts beating in my bosom?

THIRD SOLDIER.

And so do I, and so does every man. By her coming the garrison's doubled, without counting the fresh men she brought. Here's our Captain.

Enter GAUCOURT and COARAZE.

Count Gaucourt, is it true that an assault is to be made on the nearest tower to-day?

GAUCOURT.

I have heard some talk of it. Close the gate. (*The soldiers shut the gate.*) Now bolt it. (*They bolt it.*) Hearken my strict command: No man must open or

unbar that gate, until I order it. Let none come near the gate : guard it at your peril.

COARAZE.

I have misgivings. Will these men achieve your orders, clashing against the Maid's commands ?

GAUCOURT.

They have no will but mine. So closely knit
Their motions are to me, to disobey
They'd feel a suicide. Habit, drill, and now
Necessity, have ta'en such hold of them,
They're passive bodies, whose one soul is me.
They are machines, not men ; and *my* machines.

Enter the MAID, attended by a Squire and Herald, and followed by Soldiers. GAUCOURT and COARAZE stand on one side.

MAID.

Open the gate.

FIRST SOLDIER.

We are forbid by our Captain.

MAID.

Where is your Captain ?

[GAUCOURT *comes forward.*

Count Gaucourt, 'tis good
Th' obedience of your soldiers ; for, tight discipline

Is to an army more than stoutest mail.
Now order them to ope the gate to me.

GAUCOURT.

I cannot. I condemn the assault to-day.

MAID.

Traitor! Dare you to be so mutinous?
Warriors, obey your chief: unbolt the gate.

[The soldiers, with a rush, unbolt and fling open the gate.]

Now follow me, for France and victory!

[Exit through the gate, followed by all the soldiers: others come hastening through it from the town.]

COARAZE.

I've made a gross mistake, and so have you

[To GAUCOURT.]

But one way for us to retrieve ourselves,
And that's to fight, and fight among the foremost.

GAUCOURT.

I have no soldiers: all have followed her.

COARAZE.

Let's after them: fight,—that's the word to-day.

[Exit, pulling GAUCOURT with him.]

Enter from the town several elderly citizens and a lame soldier ; at intervals the booming of cannon is heard.

SOLDIER.

Could it but mend my leg, that tingling sound !

FIRST CITIZEN (*to soldier*).

Gustave, climb on to the wall, and tell us what you see.

SOLDIER.

I'll try: the next best thing to being in a fight is, to look at it. (*Climbs up.*) Ha ! I see them all. There's the Maid, galloping in front. And beyond is the English line. Ah ! I know how hard it is to break that wall of courage.

FIRST CITIZEN.

We don't want to hear praise of the English.

SOLDIER.

The more praise they get, the greater our credit if we beat them. They've taken the half of France from us, and shut us up here in Orleans. Could cowards do that ?

SECOND CITIZEN.

Don't talk, but tell us what you see.

SOLDIER.

Here to the left, Talbot chafes to help his countrymen. He shows his teeth, but dares not come far enough out to bite, the Bastard so shields with ready squadrons the Maid's assault. Ha! La Hire charges from the right with all his troop. Hurrah! the English break. What's this? Our left wing's routed. Where's the Maid? I see her not — I see her not. Ha! there she is; she was unhorsed: she's up again; she plunges among our flying ranks: they rally round her; cling about her like children to their mother in a storm. There, she rushes on the foe, waves her banner: not a man but leaps after her. 'Tis now the English turn: they fly, ours after them, pell-mell upon and into the fort. Victory! Victory! The day is ours: Orleans is saved. This is the first blow; the last will not be long behind it.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Look again. Tell us what you see now.

SOLDIERS.

Scores of prisoners are led away. There's the Maid, quite near. Her horse limps. She's dismounting: she leans upon her Squire. She's coming back.

[He descends from the wall.]

Enter the MAID, attended by her Herald and Squire, who carries her banner ; some stains of blood on her armor.

MAID (*to the Herald*).

Guyenne, the prisoners, see them well supplied,
It seems as I had had a battle's dream,
Which frights me in the memory of its rage,
But did not in the doing. Stains of blood !

[Looking at her armor.

The blood of fellow-creatures ! Strange ! most strange !
My mother ! — what would she have thought had she
Seen me to-day !

[Looking up.

Thy will be done ! Guyenne,
Bid the church-bells to ring, that all the people
May meet, and kneel in reverent thankfulness.

[Exit GUYENNE.

Lend me thy arm, Daulon (*to the Squire*) ; I'm weary
weak.

There's too much woman in my muscles still.
But I shall harden. By and by, perhaps,
I may in turn give you a helping arm.

[Exit slowly, leaning on DAULON'S arm. Church-bells ringing.

SCENE III.

The Royal Residence at Chinon.

The KING, the Dukes of ALENÇON and VENDOME.

ALENÇON.

Shall the long life of Carlovingian Kings
Cease suddenly in thee, buried, like corpse
Of guilty suicide, in its own cross roads,
Clotted with gore of Frenchmen vainly shed ;
While o'er our France, in doubtless sovereignty,
Flares the red flag of England's baby-king,
The upstart brat of proud Plantagenet ?

KING.

My cousin Alençon, you fear too much.
France is not lost, even if Orleans be.

ALENÇON.

What is the body worth, when arms and legs
Are severed off? If Orleans be not lost,
What we shall gain by Orleans will be lost, —
A wide prestige, and strength from victory, —
Unless we ship us fearless on the flood

Loosed by the Maid, the flood of life and valor
Resprung in people's hearts, heaving to bear
Their rightful King onward to triumph's crest.

KING.

Orleans is not yet free : when will it be ?

ALENÇON.

The Maid has entered Orleans ; and if she
Issues not thence victorious, I'll go hide
A bowed shame-stricken head in farthest isle,
Where sight shall not be prematurely dimmed
By daily glaring at a conquered France,
Nor ears be deafened by the whine of slaves.

VENDOME.

My Liege, that Alençon exaggerates
The dangers of our plight, I cannot think.
Yourself, the throne, our house, all, all is lost,
Unless we quickly, boldly, back the Maid.
Victory is the pet child of trustful swiftmess.

Enter a KNIGHT, booted and spurred, in haste.

KNIGHT.

Your Majesty, I'm ordered to deliver
To your own hands a brief dispatch.

[Gives a letter.]

KING.

From Orleans?

KNIGHT.

Sire, from the Maid herself.

KING.

Read it, Alençon.

ALENÇON (*reading*).

“ Most gracious King, with news of victory
I greet the royal ear. But one hour since
The fort St. Loup was carried by assault.
Two hundred slain ; as many prisoners.
Our loss was light. Within a week, I trust
Your Orleans will be freed. Let me beseech
Your Majesty to move nearer to us.
More work will be to do, and it will need
Swiftness. Your faithful servant, Joan, the Maid.”

KING.

’Tis a strange girl, this Joan of Arc.

ALENÇON.

Strange, Sire !

Far more than that ; a wondrous maid, a power
To save dear France, if she be seconded.

KING.

She shall be seconded. On, then, to Selles.
We'll welcome there the victress out of Orleans.
You, Alençon, gather your forces in
For this new work.

ALENÇON.

That will I with a will.
To see you, Sire, in this high regal mood,
Glads me with something of the old-time joy.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE IV.

One of the English Forts, outside of Orleans.

Lords TALBOT and SUFFOLK, SIR WILLIAM BLUNT, SIR HERBERT HAMPTON, SIR HENRY CLIFFORD.

TALBOT.

Sooner than fly to save John Talbot's life,
Single I'd hew my way to Orleans' heart,
And there, begirt, my back against a wall,
Challenge fierce, hungry death to tilt at me

With sharpened point of thousand thirsty spears,
Thrust by the wrath in vengeful Frenchmen's thews.
But I am not mine own, that I may feast
Mine honor on such dainty death. Brave comrades,
Our lives, the lives of all these men, we hold
In trust for England and our king. My friend, —
For such I'm proud to call Sir William Blunt, —
A veteran in the services of war,
Your judgment hath especial worth for all.
Shall we retreat, or stand the brunt of siege ;
For henceforth we're no longer the besiegers,
But the besieged, so lopped are all our means.

BLUNT.

Noble Lord Talbot, rather would I fall
With you, gashed by a thousand Frankish swords,
Than turn my back upon this girlish host.
But we must hence, and quickly, would we save
The remnant of our force for wiser war.

TALBOT.

Sir Herbert, you're not giv'n to craven counsels :
What say you ?

HAMPTON.

I've no mind to be here butchered
'Mid a slack herd of lily-livered knaves,

Dastards whom I've seen shake at distant sight
Of this she-devil. Had I not myself
Mustered them in Northamptonshire, I'd think
My corps were never sprung from English loins,
Their pluck so shrinks before this warrior-witch.
Transfer them quick to unenchanted fields.

TALBOT.

Sir Henry, will you bide the worst, or move ?

CLIFFORD.

Let us away at once : this very day
My men of choice, whom never did I know
Give ground before, fled from this master-Maid.
Myself encountered her, and by St. George,
Had she not worn her beaver up, I'd thought
The champion knight of France the sword's hilt clutched
That gave and took so nimbly. My men gone,
When hers rushed to her rescue, slowly I
Gave way, fronting the numerous enemy,
As doth become a Clifford. And, my Lords,
Be she devil or angel, this I'll say,
She bears her like an Amazonian Queen.

TALBOT.

My Lord of Suffolk, you are youngest here ;
But your ripe judgment weighs with the most weighty.

SUFFOLK.

I would not play the braggart, and so set
Myself against this concord's perfectness.
Were here proud England's bravest chivalry,
To a man they'd say, in such a case as this,
Lord Talbot's will were binding rule for all.

TALBOT.

Then, gentlemen, prepare to march at dawn.
We will not steal away by night, like thieves,
But lift our eager pennons to the wind
When the brave sun declares them to the foe ;
And then, to loud drum-beat, slowly depart.
Should they attack us : — but I hope they will not : —
I might forget my duty to my King,
And, thinking only of myself, my sword
Sheathe in so many Frenchmen's hearts, I should
Fall dead among them from pure weariness.

SCENE V.

The Eastern Gate of Orleans, at Daybreak.

Enter SAINTRAILLES and LA HIRE. Soldiers about the gate.

SAINTRAILLES.

With what pacific prodigality of pomp
And gorgeous great accompaniment, the sun
Ushers his entrance to our warring world,
Which heedeth not his wholesome majesty,
So blinded is it by unwholesome dreams.

LA HIRE.

But here are many who, in eagerness
To cope again the worsted English troop,
Greet this new morning's glow with a delight
As fresh and firm as 'twere their wedding-day.
There's nothing men so crave as leadership;
And naught so lifts the leader to his place
As soul, — a soul so large that other souls
Run to it for refreshment, and repair,
As centripetal veins into the heart.
Our King and Captains all were impotent,
When suddenly an untaught peasantess

Bounds from the earth, so quick with heavenly gifts,
Men, women, old and young, sway to her will,
Ruled by the deep humanity there's in her.

[A movement and voices among the Soldiers.]

What is it?

[To the Soldiers.]

FIRST SOLDIER.

The English are enrankt for battle.

SAINTRAILLES.

And so they are.

LA HIRE.

Beat drums, blow bugle's blast.

[Drums and bugles.]

Ha! boys, we'll give the lions one more chase.

FIRST SOLDIER.

We'll drive them to their cage and keep them there.

Enter the MAID in haste, partly armed.

MAID.

Hold! Stain not with unnecessary blood
The Sabbath day.

[She goes to the gate.]

LA HIRE.

They offer battle to us.

MAID.

This lengthened front is not for battle. See,
They march away. See, see.

LA HIRE.

They do, they do.

How like stout Talbot is this sunny start.
Too proud is he to sneak away by night.

MAID.

Summon all Orleans: we will follow them,
And on the plain, while still they're in our sight,
Sing to their waning ears a loud *Te Deum*.

[*Exeunt LA HIRE, SAINTRAILLES, and soldiers.*

They're gone; and rescued Orleans breathes unbound.
Now from this long o'ershadowed centre spreads
A glow, that flusheth fainting France with hope,
With high resolve. One little, rapid month,
So dyed with change! What a deep mystery
Our living here on earth, its only clew
In the great life beyond, and that there is
A life beyond. Man were a raveled skein,
Not to be disentangled, did his threads

Not wind themselves upon the long hereafter.
He mounts and mounts to ever cleaner day,
They who're above him beckoning him to them.
How fresh the joy of going always up,
At each stage quick with wider, sweeter being.
Distressful life's sole sweetener is love,
Love, lifting while it lights and furthers us ;
For onward is aye surer when 'tis upward.
But love itself hangs weights upon our feet :
Love's life's in selfless helpfulness, whereby
We rise the highest when we most descend.
And now, to cheer the million sufferers
Of this worn France, I must at once alight
Upon the poisoned marsh of sluggishness,
Where lives, or rather fails to live, the King.
I'll snatch him up into this triumph's gale,
And bear him on to Rheims, to holy Rheims.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Royal Residence at Selles.

*The KING, the Dukes of ALENÇON and VENDOME. To them
enter COUNT DUNOIS and SAINTRAILLES.*

KING.

My gallant warriors, whom to thank the most
I know not, all have done so well.

DUNOIS.

My Liege,
The Captain of us all, the wondrous Maid,
Your choice thanks keep for her.

SAINTRAILLES.

Your Majesty,
Into the men who drove th' investing force
From Orleans she inbreathed the soul that wrought.

Enter the MAID, her Brother, her Squire, and LA HIRE.

KING (*to whom she kneels*).

Rise Maid of Orleans. By this title's fame
Be henceforth known to Christendom for aye.
High Maid of Orleans, France and France's King
Owe you a boundless debt, whereof this hour
I'll pay a portion. Name your largest wish.
This is your brother?

MAID.

Sire, my brother Pierre.
The favor I would ask your Majesty —

KING.

Say it: 'tis fully granted ere you speak.

MAID.

But part is done. What has been gained at Orleans,
And what shall be 'twixt this and Rheims — all is
Initiatory to the deed at Rheims,
The crowning of you there. My gracious King,
The favor I would beg is, that you will
Speed me to Rheims with all your means and power.
Until you, Sire, are crowned, and crowned at Rheims,
Nor friend nor foe reveres or feels your kingship.

KING.

But ask you nothing for your kin, dear Maid?
Your father, brother, — nothing for yourself?

MAID.

I ask deliverance for the kingdom, and
My soul's integrity: naught else. A high
Sacred commission is intrusted me:
Who therein aideth, profits me the most.

KING.

From this to Rheims the way is full of perils.

MAID.

Perils are spurs that prick the brave to action:
Like mistresses they fire the souls of knights
To liveliest movement. Zest they give to exploits,
Lacking the which, tame these and flavorless.
Of every peril, Sire, I'll make a prop,
So that your earthly strength shall fortify
The holy strength the consecration gives.
The triumphs won upon the way will weave
A jeweled band to clasp the crown at Rheims,
And hold it tightly to your royal brow.

KING.

Our troops are faint: we gain by resting them.

MAID.

Our every halt is respite to the foe.
He's worn in limb and heart, while we are flushed
With mastery, all jubilant with hope.

KING.

'Tis well ; and you shall have full furtherance meet.
To-morrow I, in honor of yourself
And your brave comrades, hold a festival :
To this I bid you all, and after that
Will haste you on your way.

MAID.

Pardon, my Liege —

KING.

What! not a day?

MAID.

Not one, most gracious King.
The day for feasting is when work is done.
In war Time lends his scythe unto the swift.
The spirit's up in France: let it have swing.
Cool, slacken it, not with an hour's pause.
Knights and armed men are streaming to our ranks,
Vowed to uplift down-trodden, wasted France

To rightful place of august sovereignty,
And drive these English to their petty isle.
Battles are ringing loudly in my ears,
And Frankish shouts of victory. My Liege,

[*Kneeling.*

I do beseech you, let me march at once.

KING (*raising her up*).

Almost your words weave harness to my back.
Your wish shall be my law, great Maid of Orleans.

MAID.

La Hire, we rest to-night. At earliest dawn
Be all afoot, ready for quickest step.
I beg you, Sire, to let me now withdraw.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Plain north of the Loire, near the Town of Patay.

Enter TALBOT and CLIFFORD, meeting.

CLIFFORD.

Lord Talbot, get you ready for a fight.

TALBOT.

But are the French so near ?

CLIFFORD.

In battle ranged,
And close at hand.

TALBOT.

Full of surprises she,
The nimble witch. 'Too late to fall back now
To picked position, and I'm glad 'tis so:
I'd rather fight, even though chances scowl.
Know you the name of the small town t'our left ?

CLIFFORD.

Patay, my lord.

TALBOT.

Clifford, I have misgivings.
But come : we'll fight the battle of Patay.

[*Exeunt.*

The scene opens ; at the back of the stage " Alarums, excursions ; "
then enter SUFFOLK, fighting as he retreats before two French
soldiers led by a SERGEANT.

SERGEANT.

Cease barren blows : what can one sword 'gainst three ?
Surrender ; or we'll hack you limb by limb.

SUFFOLK.

Suffolk was never yet a prisoner.
His ransom will be rich. Name what 'twill be,
And, on the honor of an English peer,
The double shall be paid you if you now
Let me go free.

SERGEANT.

It cannot be, great lord.
Or yield your sword, or here be hewn to death.

SUFFOLK.

You are a gentleman?

SERGEANT.

I am, my lord.

SUFFOLK.

Your name?

SERGEANT.

William Regnault.

SUFFOLK.

Are you a Knight?

SERGEANT.

I'm not a Knight.

SUFFOLK.

Suffolk yields not his sword
To less than Knight. Then William Regnault, kneel,
And here I'll dub you.

[SERGEANT *kneels*: SUFFOLK *touches the SERGEANT's shoulders with his sword.*

Rise, Sir William Regnault.
Sir Knight, here is my sword.

[*Giving it.*

Come, now away.

SERGEANT.

Guard him and treat him well: his worth's a fortune.

[*Exit SUFFOLK with the two soldiers.*

Enter another French SERGEANT.

SERGEANT.

What, William, you at rest this busy day?

SIR WILLIAM.

Be you familiar with your equals, Sir.

SERGEANT.

Holloa! What's this?

SIR WILLIAM.

You're speaking to a Knight.

SERGEANT. *

How? She has dubbed you?

SIR WILLIAM.

No: Lord Suffolk.

SERGEANT.

What?

SIR WILLIAM.

See here, his sword.

SERGEANT.

The hilt glistens with diamonds

SIR WILLIAM.

I'll tell you more anon. Now to the field,
To win a second time my spurs.

SERGEANT.

By Jove,

You're in luck, Bill.

SIR WILLIAM.

Sir William.

SERGEANT.

Ah! Sir William.

[Exeunt.]

Enter a French SOLDIER with a prisoner.

SOLDIER.

Laggard, you make believe you're wounded, do you?

[Strikes him to the ground with his sword.]

Enter the MAID.

MAID.

Dastard! it cannot be that thou art French.

Strike a poor, wounded, unarmed prisoner!

Back to the ranks, and strike there armèd men.

*[Exit SOLDIER. She goes to the prisoner and kneels beside
him tenderly]*

He has not life enough to rise, poor wretch.

Within the cores of men demons lie coiled,

Which war's hot fury heats to hellish blaze.

Enter TALBOT.

TALBOT.

Whoe'er thou art, yield thee : I am the Talbot.

MAID.

Yield thee : I am the Maid.

[Raises her vizor.

TALBOT.

Ha ! art thou she ?

But no : Talbot fights not with women. Yet,
To let escape thou art too great a captive.
Come on ! I will disarm, not slay or wound thee.

*[They fight : after a few passés TALBOT'S sword is struck
from his hand.*

What strength unearthly nerves thy arm ?

MAID.

God's strength,
The strength of right, which angels favor now.

TALBOT *(half aside)*.

By Heaven, her port and look are high and modest.

MAID.

The famed Lord Talbot is a nobleman

By nature as by name. Through fellow-feeling
Can he not know there floods another's breast
The current too of truth and nobleness.

Enter in haste the MAID'S Herald, GUYENNE.

GUYENNE.

The foe is full in flight, ours in pursuit.
Suffolk is taken, and great Talbot slain.

MAID.

Here is Lord Talbot: him, Guyenne, I trust
To your especial 'tendance and respect.
Enguard him well, but treat him like a king.

*[Exit TALBOT with GUYENNE, TALBOT bowing to her with
surprise and admiration]*

Onward, onward ; still onward to the goal.
Again the sight's as full of ghastly death
As were at dawn these ripening fields with hope,
Which angry hosts have trampled into slime.
And all this slaughter for the good of France !
Is death the way to life, the legal way ?
Daily from his vast charnel-house, the earth,
Life rises up in smiling resurrection,
As from the longest, blackest night the sun,
To renovate the world with loveliness.

A resurrection and a redecease —
This is th' eternal, deep, creative round.
And as acts steep them in the soul of good
And clean ascension, so their sure revival
Is quick with beauty and with power's cheer.
No planted seeds rise with such bettered sap
As aspiration. Thus through death we grow
Up being's heights. The truer is the life
That sinks in death, the livelier is its leap
Upon the scale. I have not long to live.
Athwart the mist death looms more clear and clear.
But wherefore stain my mind with thoughts of me?
My soul's fidelity unto itself, —
Hold sacred that, and with it, faith in good,
And I shall never lack Heaven's help and smile.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

*Domremy. In front of the cottage of Jacques d'Arc,
father of the Maid.*

Enter from the cottage her FATHER and MOTHER.

FATHER.

This is but talk and rumor ; not a soul do we know
of who has spoken with or seen her.

MOTHER.

But the rumors are all one way, and for some time
past they come thicker and less like rumors

Enter an old SOLDIER.

SOLDIER.

Are you Jacques d'Arc ?

FATHER.

Aye, I am he.

SOLDIER.

The father of Joan of Arc ?

MOTHER.

That's our daughter : what know you of her ?

SOLDIER.

Know of her! Was I not with her at Orleans?

MOTHER.

Then it is all true about Orleans?

SOLDIER.

All true? Have you not heard? How she entered Orleans with new levies; how she took fort after fort; how the English gave up the siege and fled.

MOTHER (*falling on her husband's neck*).

Our dear, dear Joan!

SOLDIER.

At the last sortie I was close behind her, until I was knocked down. As she came back, after the victory, she got off her horse and helped me up: I was only bruised. I kissed her gauntleted hand. She said I had done enough, was getting old; asked me about my family, told me to come to her the next day, and she would give me my discharge. When I went, she gave me money too. They say she hears voices of angels: I believe it, for she's an angel herself.

MOTHER.

O my sweet child!

SOLDIER.

I left Orleans the next day, the day she started for the King. I'm glad I've seen you : I came out of my way to see the father and mother of the great Captain.

FATHER.

The great Captain?

SOLDIER.

Aye, the Captain of them all. Farewell.

[*Going*

FATHER.

Tarry with us to-day.

MOTHER.

Rest here till to-morrow.

SOLDIER.

Thanks, thanks : but I must get home to-night. From
wife
And children I've been away more than two years.
Farewell.

MOTHER *and* FATHER.

Farewell! Farewell.

[*Exit*

FATHER.

Wonderful! He talks like a man of truth.

MOTHER.

I'll answer for him. But where is son Pierre, who *would* go with her. Why does not he come back?

Enter PIERRE.

MOTHER *and* FATHER.

Pierre!

[He throws himself into their arms.]

MOTHER.

And Joan, how is she? where is she?

PIERRE.

Joan is well, and more than well. O father, your daughter is greater than the King: she's a mighty power in France for good. 'Tis all so strange and sudden, I hardly seem to know it, though I've seen it.

MOTHER.

Where is she now?

PIERRE.

I left her an hour after the battle of Patay, the greatest of the many she has won. "Pierre," she said, "as swiftly as your horse will carry you, ride to Domremy." Then she threw her arms round my neck and

kissed me passionately: "Carry these kisses to my dear father and mother." Here they are: (*He embraces them both.*) And then she wept sweet tears. Dear mother, father, I cannot tell you what she is. She has outgrown me so, I scarcely know her for my sister. "Tell them," she said, "I cannot go to them. but you bring them to Rheims." When I came away—as if she yearned to go whither I was going—she held my hand long in hers, her hand which an hour before had taken great Talbot prisoner.

MOTHER.

The terrible Talbot?

PIERRE.

Aye, and Suffolk too was taken, and many more; all that were not captured fled swift away, pursued by La Hire and Armagnac, and other of our high chiefs. But she is chief of the chiefs.

FATHER.

I cannot get it all in at once. But I don't like women taking such lead.

PIERRE.

Women will take the lead at times: it seems to be God's will. Queen Isabel, mother of the King, she

took the lead to ruin France ; and but for another woman's taking a higher lead, she would have ruined France.

FATHER.

What other woman ?

PIERRE.

Your daughter Joan. She's the Savior of France.
Let us go in : I need to rest.

[Exeunt into the cottage.]

SCENE IV.

The French camp before Troyes.

Council of War : the KING, the ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS, ALENÇON, DUNOIS, GAUCOURT, COARAZE.

KING.

Another week before this stubborn town
Would wear our army out.

ARCHBISHOP.

Were't not outworn
Already, sulking in low laxity.

KING.

Is your Maid mending, Alençon?

ALENÇON.

My Liege,
You lift me to new rank, calling her mine.
Happy I am to say, she's convalescent.

ARCHBISHOP.

I did not know that angels could be sick.

ALENÇON.

I've known a bishop ill, aye, very ill,
And of a foul disease.

DUNOIS.

Your Majesty,
Send for the Maid : hear her.

KING.

'Tis well bethought.
Dunois, yourself go fetch her.

[Exit DUNOIS.

GAUCOURT.

What can she,
My Liege, do 'gainst these walls?

ALENÇON.

What she has done
'Gainst stouter walls than these, 'gainst gates of Orleans,
Held bolted in her face by Count Gaucourt —

GAUCOURT.

My men broke from me and would not obey.

ALENÇON.

Nor will they now obey any but her.
Are memories so short? 'Tis not three months
Since France was wasted, sunk; defeat our wont;
When from our furthest eastern bound there stole
A rumor of this Maid, fleeing before,
Like scented dawn prelude to the light;
And soon herself shone out, warming all hearts;
Then quick was raised the siege of hopeless Orleans.

COARAZE.

Who helpt her, save we Captains with our cohorts?

ALENÇON.

Cæsar himself could not have conquered Gaul
Without his legions; but, into each man
He put some of the life of Cæsar's soul.
It doth amaze and irk me every day,

To see men have so little heart for greatness,
To see them unillumed by present splendor ;
But rather with their littleness they strive
To cast eclipse upon the glow that lights them,
Like creature moon upon creative sun.
Must I recall what this rare Maid achieved ?
Have all of you lost vision of that flag
Whose vaward gleam shone like a dove, from Heav'n
New lighted, prophesying victory,
While wonders grew about her as she wrought.
Suffolk held forth Jargau in her path :
She carried it by sudden bold assault ;
Then steep Beaugency stormed ; and with Patay
She quitted them for shameful Agincourt.
But here she comes : the sight of her again
Refills my soul with joyfulness and hope.

Enter the MAID in light armor, and DUNOIS.

KING.

Dear Maid, most glad I am to see the sun
Glisten once more upon your healthy cheek.
Pains that rack you are envious of us all.
This rebel town hath held us here a week,
Much longer than we hoped ; and yet, they say,
'Twill need another week to compass it.

MAID.

My Liege, there needeth not the half a day.

ARCHBISHOP.

What fresh presumptuous arrogance is this?

MAID.

Presumptuous priest, who in thy darkened soul
Harbor'st nor faith nor honesty —

KING.

Dear Maid,
Bethink thee, he's the reverend Lord Archbishop.

MAID.

Great King, my prompters, counselors, and guides,
They know no lords on earth, but only souls ;
Nor lords, nor magistrates, nor kings, nor priests,
But only who is false and who is true.
This false priest is a traitor too.

ARCHBISHOP.

How dar'st thou,
And in this presence, give thy ribald tongue
Such license of untruth.

MAID.

Before the King,
And all this company, I will proclaim
Thy treason, if thou dost not come at once
And hear me whisper to thee what I know.

[The ARCHBISHOP approaches her in evident alarm.]

ARCHBISHOP.

What can you know?

[After she has whispered in his ear, he starts, then sneaks away.]

DUNOIS.

Like a whipt spaniel, see,
Th' Archbishop sneaks away.

MAID.

Your Majesty,
Shall we go summon this rebellious town?
*[As she walks towards the back of the stage, the scenes open,
and show the walls of Troyes, with citizens on them.]*
Good citizens of Troyes, you are at heart,
As in your speech, true Frenchmen. Here's your King,
Your rightful, lawful, far-descended King.
He comes in power, and in mercy too,
To claim his own, which is, Frenchmen's allegiance.
He offers you full pardon for yourselves,

Honorable exit for the garrison.

You see our force of thousands, prompt to bridge
The fosse and scale your walls. Spare us the need.
Open your gates to brothers, not to foes.

A CITIZEN.

We do accept the King's most generous terms.
We will unbar the gates and welcome him.

[Exeunt citizens from the walls

MAID.

Most gracious King, let us now on again.
Rheims waits for us, and France for regal Rheims.
When you from Rheims shall march, rebellious towns
Will ope their gates and shout triumphant welcomes
To the crowned Majesty of rescued France.

[The curtain drops.]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Rheims. In front of the Cathedral.

Enter two Gentlemen, meeting.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Too late you are to see the spectacle.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I feared so.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Coronation like to this
Was never, nor will ever be, beheld.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

So many bishops in their gorgeousness ?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

The mitres I'd no time to count or think of,
My eyes, all eyes, so clung, with ravishment,
To the great personage.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

And I too late
To see him! How was he attired?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

The King?
I hardly saw him.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

What! not see the King?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

The King, sir, was a puppet in that scene ;
And such a scene ! where senses, feeling, thought,
Each had a fresh extravagant delight.
And she, a peasant girl from cottage hearth,
Creator of it all ! By power of soul,
With master's regnant intellect colleagued,
France she has rescued ; crowned, installed the King ;
Into the people national life rebreathed.
As, high in martial panoply, she stood
Beside the King, the many thousands there,
That stretched the church with panting populousness,
O'erjoyed its vasty spaces with their wonder,
All bosoms heaving graticudes to her,
All eyelids glistening with acknowledgment.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Where is she now?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Still in the church. I stayed
But half an hour: I cared not witnessing
The pomps of sacerdotal conjuration.
They're coming out: stand we aside to see them.

The church door opens; then through it enter the KING, the MAID, ALENÇON, VENDOME, DUNOIS, the Father, Mother, Brother, and Squire of the MAID; the Squire bearing her banner; people following.

MAID (*falling on her knees*).

Most gracious King, I pray your Majesty, —
Th' anointed, ripened Majesty of France, —
Let now thy servant go, go to my home:
My task is done.

KING.

Arise, great Maid of Orleans:

[Lifting her up.

The foremost subject of my grateful realm.
By nature noblest 'mong the noble, thee
I only can exalt in outward name,
To mate thy inwardness, installing thee

In the first class of French nobility,
Thee and thy kin, which solemnly I do,
And here proclaim. And for escutcheon, thus :
In field of azure, sword with hilt of gold,
Blade argent, lifting on its point the crown :
Two fleurs de-lis in pale. Dunois, thy sword :
Nay, here's a fitter one : thine, noble Maid.
Pierre d'Arc, kneel down. Rise, Sir Pierre. Alençon,
Note this : henceforth, the parish Domremy,
As birthplace of the Maid of Orleans, is
Exempt from tax for aye.

[The MAID falls on her Mother's neck.

And, furthermore,

'Tis ordered, that from the King's treasury,
Unto her parents annually be paid
Two hundred crowns, the payment to begin
The day the siege was raised of Orleans.
For thee, dear Maid, not yet is done thy task ;
Nor will it be, so long as France's soil
Is bruised by hoof of English combatant.
Illustrious as hath been thy warrior-work,
'Tis but begun. The King has yet to win
His kingdom. Foes still swarm upon his land.
'Twere to desert us, did you quit us now.
Thou art our inspiration, and all need
Thy breath and presence for their constancy.

Above our heads we could not miss that flag,
Whose shimmer reddened Frenchmen's blood, and
sped it

With triple speed through every lifted arm.

But, come to me anon, and we'll talk further.

[*Exeunt the KING, ALENÇON, VENDOME, DUNOIS.*

- MAID.

'Twas then a dream, — a dream how sweet and sunny!
I never can be shepherdess again:

I'm not mine own. More blood, more sieges, battles.

They give me hints of something great, but fearful,

That's soon to be. Ah me! Grant me more strength.

[*Looking up.*

Come, father, mother, let us go and weep.

[*Exeunt, followed by the people, none of whom had gone
with the KING.*

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

(*He follows her across the stage with hands uplifted.*)

With what rebounding ease she moves and mounts.

The high should be on high, the low below;

Else action's wheels strain sighing in a slough,

And keep no pace with life's loved promptitudes.

'This present joyousness of sweet success

Is solely due to quick conformity

To reclamations of th' impending Will,

Against whose benison our daily fret
Keeps us forever bruised and dislocate.
In France's sour, self-wrought extremity,
God hath unkinged a fruitless man-made King,
And set above him this great woman-King,
Blest with the gifts and secrets of command.
She comes a heavenly apparition, lapped
In human forces and appliances.
Ever above infinitude's horizon
Fresh truths are looming, freighted with new light, —
For those whose eyes and wishes see them shine.
This is one of the brightest. Shall we go
And bathe us deeper in its bracing beams ?

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A room in the Royal Residence at Rheims.

KING (*alone*).

What a wild tenderness enraptures me !
This can but be the sudden burst to flame
Of passion stored unconsciously away.
And yet it seemed full flashed in that one moment.
Her upward look of maiden holiness

Shot into me a life, so absolute
I felt no other feeling, had no thought,
Nor even knew when the won crown enringed me.
A partnership so close there is among
The fiery constituents of our being,
Each kindles each ; and sometimes all on one
Throw the united pulsings of the soul,
That but by this one is the man inflamed ;
As I am now, and with a deepening thrill
I never knew before. A triumph this
She surely looked not for. Ha ! here she is.

Enter the MAID.

MAID.

My Liege, I come because you summoned me.
Is there a hope for me ?

KING.

As for us all.
We all must to the war again ; and thou
The foremost : this brave war is thine. 'Tis thou
Hast made it what it is. Should I just now,
Should all the Captains, throw our harness off,
What wouldst thou deem ? And thou art worth us all,
The shepherd thou of bold, victorious flocks.

Be not downcast. Who is so blest as thou?
Think with what thanks, joy, admiration, France
And France's King inclose thee in their hearts.
What still I'd do for thee thou canst not think.

MAID.

My Liege, for what you've done for all my kin
I thank your Majesty. It is enough:
I wish naught more for them or for myself.

KING.

Thy modesty may be content with little;
Not so broad France. She'd have thee placed where she,
Upgazing, can with every morn rethank thee,
A visible sign to all of Christendom
Of her great gratitude. First, then, a title.

MAID.

My gracious King, titles are not for me.

KING.

Who more deserves a regal title? And,
There's one would like to give thee such, — the highest.
Let me see: Orleans — that's already claimed.
Patay: that's it: the Duchess of Patay.

MAID.

'The *Maid of Orleans*, that's the title, Sire,
You've given me, and by that I would abide.

KING.

Thou art too good, too great, too beautiful,
And still so innocent thou know'st it not.
But thou must let thy King give thee, dear Maid,
Warm tokens of his gratitude, — his love.

[*He puts his arm round her waist.*

MAID (*starting away from him*).

Avaunt! Is this the shape the tempter takes?
Com'st thou all hot from hell? Back to thy home!
My soul is free, and stout for self-protection.
I would unflesh me, and, bare skeleton,
Stalk hideous through the world, rather than be
A rounded thing to whet the lusts of men.
O woman, woman! how art thou beset!
Thy very tenderness is a decoy
To snare thee. With thy soul's mobility,
Thy pity and thy melting lovingness,
They lime the twig to lock thy free-born feet,
Using thy trustfulness to cheat thy heart;
Then loosen thee, a slave to thy low self,
Deplumed, sad, lonely, withered, void, unsexed.

O God! I shudder at the wantonness
Which strews the earth with outcasts beautiful!

KING.

Unwittingly I have affrighted thee.
Maiden imagination so hath wrought,
Thou seest black harms where smiling good was meant.

MAID.

I cannot blacken them, so deep are they
With rot ingrained. I would, Sire, take my leave.

[Going.

KING.

Nay, pause: thou must not part in this false mood.

MAID.

I pray your Majesty: I cannot stay.

[Going.

KING.

Your sovereign master then commands you stay.

MAID.

The King commands the subject, not the woman.
I am myself sole master of myself.

[Exit

SCENE III.

The English Camp in Normandy.

*The DUKE OF BEDFORD, Lords TALBOT and SUFFOLK, and SIR
HENRY CLIFFORD.*

BEDFORD.

Compiègne not yet submitted?

TALBOT.

Nor, your Highness,
Like to be. She has fought her way into it.

BEDFORD.

Ha! Curses on her? How she baffles us!
What is our lavish sinfulness, that we
So deluged are with chastisement? Who's here?

Enter a KNIGHT in haste, booted, with whip in hand.

There lightens from thy face a good report.

KNIGHT.

My lord, 'tis rumored that the Maid is taken.

[Stir and exclamations]

BEDFORD.

Only a rumor?

KNIGHT.

Yesterday, in Paris,
This rumor lifted from our hearts their gloom.
Quick mounting, I rode all the night to joy
Herewith your Highness. But the shorter way
Through Beauvais lies from sieged Compiègne. From
thence
Has nothing come ?

Enter in haste from the other side another COURIER-KNIGHT.

SECOND KNIGHT.

She's taken, she's taken ! These eyes
Saw her a prisoner. Your royal Highness,
Here's a dispatch from John of Luxembourg,
Count de Ligny, whose captive she now is.
In a bold sortie from Compiègne, her corps
Was crushed, and she by a Picard archer seized.

*[As the KNIGHT and the others carry on a lively talk, the
DUKE OF BEDFORD walks aside*

BEDFORD.

'Tis much too big for instant measurement,
This new event. And now to make the most
Of such high-foaming fortune. Let me see.
Ligny will hold her at a royal ransom :

As kings now go, she's worth a score of kings.
The consecration at historic Rheims
Was worth a manful army to the French.
Transformed it must be into desecration ;
And that by proving her a sorceress.
She had Charles crowned. Judge her the Devil's tool,
And he's uncrowned in public sentiment.
The general feeling is a mighty power.
The Church must be our instrument to damn her.
We've often been her sword : now she'll be ours.
This interchange of help twixt Church and State
Strengthens, for priest and king, despotic sway.
The Church once vouched for her. But what of that?
For a proportioned end she'll eat her words
As glib and heartily as e'er the wafer.
At once about it.—Gentlemen, to-day
Than yesterday we're stronger by a force
Equal to fifty thousand men. Come then,
Let's fall at once upon the hamstrung foe.

[*Exeunt all but* CLIFFORD.]

CLIFFORD.

I am ashamed to feel the joy I do.
That Englishmen should shout and throw up caps,
Because a woman is a prisoner !
A woman, aye, but with more than the strength

Of twenty thousand of the strongest men.
There's something here not to be fathomed yet.
By indirections, tools most seeming slight,
Supremest will oft compasseth great ends.

|*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Picardy. A room in the Castle of the Duke of Ligny.

THE MAID (*reclining at first on a sofa*).

Time leaps along, and drops or picks us up,
As we had no more worth or dignity
Than particles of dust upon his feet.
* But bits of dust are something to themselves
And neighbors : each hath life, alliances,
Dependencies ; and so have I, and warmth,
Earth-warmth that hath instinctive shuddering dread
Of being cooled and quenched untimely soon.
My yearning loves reach out for earth's warm children.
I find fresh mothers, sisters, everywhere,
Who would be loved and clung to, not quick snatched
From out my twining arms. In these few weeks
This gentle, tender, radiant Countess Ligny

And her dear daughter have so planted them
Deep in my heart, 'twill be an agony
To part me from them.

Enter the COUNTESS OF LIGNY. The MAID throws herself weeping into her arms.

COUNTESS.

Still there is some hope.

MAID.

No, no : it must be as it is : it must.

COUNTESS.

The Count will let the French King ransom thee.

MAID.

He cannot, dares not : they are here too strong.

Enter the DAUGHTER of the COUNTESS.

DAUGHTER.

Mother, a troop of horse are coming hither.
They're still so far, I cannot make them out.

MAID.

They come for me.

COUNTESS.

They shall not take thee. Oh,
My husband would not be so cruel.

MAID.

No :

Not cruel, no : his hard necessity.
How I shall miss my jailors. Prisoner
Never had such, nor chains so tightly claspt, —
Your heart-strings interlinked with mine. But now
My strong deliverers are at hand.

[A bugle heard.

Ha ! There !

[Clasps her head with her hands.

COUNTESS.

I know the sound : 'tis but my husband's bugle.

MAID.

'Tis my death-knell !

COUNTESS (*embracing her*).

They shall not, shall not take thee.

MAID.

They will, and must, and should. You cannot strike —

And such a stroke — and not be struck again.
Think what a blow to England. France I've freed:
Aye, freed dear France. So young, and yet so blest!
So greatly chosen, I must greatly bear.

Enter a KNIGHT, attended by several troopers.

KNIGHT.

Madame, I bear a letter from the Count.

[Gives a letter.]

COUNTESS *(reads the letter)*.

Too true, too true! Oh! cruel, cruel! Oh!

MAID.

Weep not for me. When this our hasty work
Below is done, dear lady, we shall meet
In the high homes of heaven. And thou, sweet child,
When thy grand-children, in the far-off time,
Shall gather round thy chair, to hear thee speak
Of this sad day, they'll thank and love thee more,
That thou wast tender to the Maid of Orleans.
'That name I've earned, and with it earned my death,
Aye, greatly earned it. So then, let it come.
Farewell, farewell! We'll meet again. Forward.

[To the KNIGHT. Exit.]

SCENE V.

Rouen. A room in the Palace of the Duke of Bedford.

The DUKE OF BEDFORD, CARDINAL WINCHESTER.

BEDFORD.

Lord Cardinal Winchester, the case stands thus.
She's doomed to death by great necessities ;
And yet, a prisoner of war, I dare not
Take openly her life. The Church must lend
Fair countenance and fine machinery.

CARDINAL.

Your Highness is like many servile sinners,
Who in their flaunting moods scoff at the Church
And in extremity entreat her help.

BEDFORD.

Your Eminence has reached so high a peak
Of holy altitude, all things below,
Like choughs to towering eagle in his sweep,
Are subaltern to one so close to heaven ;
And thence the life of petty, puny earthling
Hath not a scruple's weight — if the Church needs it.

CARDINAL.

Your Highness speaks deeper than you do know.
Any, the richest, highest life is naught,
Weighed 'gainst the weal of holy Church. This life
You seek so hungrily, doubly to me
Is hateful, as I'm Roman and am English.
The fine machinery is ready mounted.
The University — tutored by me —
Will damn her devil's imp, with strongest say.
The grand Inquisitor sends deputy,
One of the two who will preside. The other,
Cauchon, — a man so fit for such a lead,
Nor coldest earth nor hottest hell could hatch
A second, him to mate. A man of hates,
Among them holy hates. Your Highness knows
What holy hates can be?

BEDFORD.

It turns me pale
To think of them : I've felt them. He's a Bishop?

CARDINAL.

Bishop of Beauvais : would be more. Perhaps.
These two preside : myself I guide the trial.
Scores of Assessors there must be. I've taught
Cauchon how to appoint them. Is not this
Prompt, promising?

BEDFORD.

Beyond my hope or thought.
To work the wheels of worldly management
Give me a topmost churchman.

CARDINAL.

Little else
Have we to do: our guidance heavenward
Is done by rote, through men's wide trustfulness.
We then are one: she dies.

BEDFORD.

A speedy death

CARDINAL.

A speedy, and by fire

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

*Rouen. The Maid's prison. The Maid in chains,
lying on the floor.*

Enter brother ISAMBART, an Augustine Friar, in costume.

ISAMBART.

She sleeps. Sleep on: snatch yet some bliss on earth
In thy clean paradise of lustrous dreams.

These with their mystic, quick, disheveled light,
Now lighten thee through battle's exultations
To thy far, lowly, holy infancy.

Chained, martyred, doomed, there lies the greatest she
Of history, — a goal, towards which, in distant times,
Men's thoughts shall straining climb to compass her.

[The MAID shrieks

What hast thou? What wild pain so tortures thee?

MAID.

Oh, the deep agony, to be awaked
From heaven, and brought back to this hell! Oh! Oh!

ISAMBART.

Dear Maid, what fiercest hell can do thee hurt?

Thou art an angel? This flesh that yet doth cling
About thy soul —

MAID (*looking up*).

See there — they nod and smile,
As they avouched thee. Brighter still! Such smiles!
You promised me deliverance. O Heaven!
What ecstasy of look! They beckon me —
And now they fade, they mount, smiling and beckoning.
[She falls prostrate.

ISAMBART.

Rise, rise: This beckoning is Heaven's call to thee.
[She rises to her knees.
Thy path is up, straight up to them. This is
The swift deliverance promised.

MAID.

Hark! their song!
It thrills me, lifts me, such a life there's in it!
I come, I come.

ISAMBART.

Aye, lifted thou wilt be
To loftier, livelier life. What is earth's death?
Death's a foul name given to the lift supreme:
Its worst, a momentary pang of birth.

Enter two Priests.

FIRST PRIEST.

The High Court Ecclesiastical summons to its presence Joan of Arc, called the Maid of Orleans. We come to attend thee. I free thy limbs.

[Removes the chains.]

ISAMBART.

Father Vincent, give her some moments yet.

FIRST PRIEST

They must be few, good brother Isambart.

[Priests withdraw.]

MAID.

Dear brother Isambart, 'tis they (*pointing up*) have sent thee
To be my comforter.

ISAMBART.

Thy comforter?

Oh, blessèd lot! that I can give some solace
To her whose being hath been a fervent flow
Of sanatory balm to million souls;
In whose great life there are such deeps, such dower,

Her lofty death will make sound hearts beat sounder
Through the long lives of untold centuries.

MAID.

Good brother Isambart, thou art a priest
The like of whom I've never known till now.
Were more as thou art, oh, the world were better.

ISAMBART.

Think not too well of me. When I'm near thee
I'm brightened, straightened, cleansed. Oh, I could
mount
Upon the sacred pile, and with thee dare
Thy baffled enemies, and rally thee
To pardon thy inhuman torturers.

MAID.

Come, let us go: thou'st made me strong. I'll beard
The tigers in their very den.

ISAMBART.

Think not
Too harshly of them. They're what they must be.

MAID.

They cannot harm me.

ISAMBART.

Harm thee! Their worst hates,
Revenues, angers, are no more to thee
'Than shadows of the transitory storm
To th' everlasting sun's resplendency.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE VII.

Rouen. Chamber of the Ecclesiastical Court.

A long table: in the centre sit CAUCHON, BISHOP OF BEAUVAIS, with mitre on, and the VICAR OF THE INQUISITOR, as chief judges; on either side of them ten or twelve Assessors. On one side, away from the table, BEDFORD and WINCHESTER are seated together.

BEAUVAIS.

More wary we must be in questioning.
By sudden subtleties she yesterday
Outwitted our devices, and escaped.

WINCHESTER.

Let gentlemen keep eye before their minds
The function of this Court, its purpose, end;
Which is, not to find innocent, but guilty.

AN ASSESSOR.

If that's its end I cannot be a member.

[*Rises.*

ANOTHER ASSESSOR.

Nor I.

[*Rises.*

BEAUVAIS.

Begone: make room for better men.

[*Exeunt the two Assessors.*

WINCHESTER.

'Tis well you're purged of these two hypocrites.

Enter a PRIEST.

PRIEST.

The prisoner's at the door.

BEAUVAIS.

Let her come in.

Enter the MAID, ISAMBART *following her.*

Joan, are you in a better mood to-day?

MAID.

What mood should be a woman in, alone,
Allowed no counsel, badgered by a Court
Packed for a predetermined doom of death?

WINCHESTER (*rises in great excitement: to BEAUVAIS*).

Rather than hear such contumacious speech
From this foul throat, tear out her tongue accursed.

MAID (*to WINCHESTER*).

Thy whetted tool is yet not sharp enough.
'Thyself, Lord Cardinal, the peer of kings,
Hidden within thy soul's dark depths, hast thou
No single ray of light, to beam and grow
And save thee from thy terrible self-doom?
There's not a man on earth who is pure devil;
For thou, yes thou, must die; and devils die not.

WINCHESTER.

Away! I'll hear no more: I'll hear no more.

[*Rushes out. Commotion and whispering among the members
of the Court.*

ISAMBART (*aside*)

How she upswings me high above myself!
I shame me for my brother priests. Her words

Strike through them like the flint's compulsive flash
Through powder, bursting their cold wrath in flame.

AN ASSESSOR.

Sometimes, — I say not always, — wast thou not,
In weaker moments, prompted by the Evil One?

MAID.

Power o'er me he never had : no, never.
From my live body tear the flesh : pluck out
The heart within me : I will say naught else.
My counsel hath been ever from on high.

ANOTHER ASSESSOR.

This is not right : this is not right. A trial
Conducted thus is null.

BEAUVAIS (*in anger*).

Silence ! or go.

And so you say (*to the MAID*) your voices were from
heaven ?

MAID.

They were, they are : for now I hear one, and
It bids me say to thee : Bishop, beware !
'Thou call'st thyself my judge : beware ! beware !

BEAUVAIS (*terrified*).

Ha ! dost thou threaten me ? Dare'st thou, dare'st thou ?
[*He whispers to an ASSESSOR to question her.*]

AN ASSESSOR.

St. Michael, was he naked when you saw him ?

MAID.

God, hath he not wherewith to clothe his own ?

ANOTHER ASSESSOR.

Believest thou, thou'rt in a state of grace ?

MAID.

If I am not, I pray God make me so :
And if I am, may I keep such blessed state.
Wretched, most wretched, I should deem myself,
If banished from the love and grace of God.
Than that I'd rather die a hundred deaths.

[*The members of the Court look at one another in dismay.
After a pause and whispering, BEAUVAIS rises.*]

BEAUVAIS.

The Court's adjourned : take her away.

[*Exit the MAID, accompanied by the two priests who brought
her, and followed by ISAMBART.*]

[*The scene closes.*]

SCENE VIII.

A Street in Rouen.

Enter, meeting, the two Assessors who left the Court

FIRST ASSESSOR.

Is it true, is it true?

SECOND ASSESSOR.

Too true, too true.

FIRST ASSESSOR.

O God!

A woman, tender, young! and innocent
As is the morning star that fades to heaven.

SECOND ASSESSOR.

To heaven doth she ascend within an hour.

FIRST ASSESSOR.

At this unmanly, fiendish murder, scream
Furies for joy, and Death holds his hard sides
At the rank bloody harvests herewith sown.
'Tis England's work, through Winchester and Bedford,

Backed by the jealous Church ; and they have used
 A Frenchman's tiger-paw to light this fire,
 To light with embers brought from deepest hell.
 But 'twill first singe and then consume themselves.

SECOND ASSESSOR.

What a death ! what a death !

FIRST ASSESSOR.

Her grandeur makes

Sublime that which her butchers would have mean.
 What a great death ! 'Twill lift this peasantess
 Even above th' heroic heights she reached
 As the one warrior-Maid. For France she fought,
 And by great fighting France she saved ; now dies,
 " Martyr for France, for justice, truth, and right ;
 A Bishop for her murderer, and judges
 For executioners ; by one great nation
 Abandoned, by another burnt alive.
 The nation she has saved cannot save her :
 That she has beaten can do naught but kill her."¹
 For man her bright ascending figure looms
 A beacon and a blessing through all time.

¹ These six lines are a free translation of a passage in an eloquent oration delivered by M. Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans, on the inauguration of a statue to the Maid at Orleans, May 8, 1856.

A fearful but most sacred duty's left :
To see her once again, as she shall pass
'To the dread place of immolation. Shall
We go?

SECOND ASSESSOR.

Ready am I to go with you.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IX.

Public Square in Rouen. In the rear a pile prepared. Soldiers around it. On either side of the pile, elevated platforms ; on one are seated the Bishop of Beauvais, the Inquisitor's Vicar, and the Assessors, on the other Cardinal Winchester and several Bishops ; Beauvais, Winchester, and the Bishops in robes and mitres ; below a motley crowd of people.

Enter the two Assessors.

FIRST ASSESSOR.

Oh what a spectacle ! Heaven surely hath
Far aims, permitting such a deed as this.
Look there : that's the bad ruthless Cardinal.
To do their proper function, prelates should

Have happier, holier thoughts than other men,
Fresh pulses from th' eternal love creative :
What thoughts are theirs who sit in highest place
To judge and burn a maiden innocent?
In this black nook, — shifted to earth from hell, —
Great Cardinal Winchester is ministering devil.
Are heaven's sluices locked, that they ope not
To shower, from streaming eyes of cherubim,
A flood of tears, and drown this wickedness?
Oh, the blind arrogance of men, that they
Would browbeat God. They snatch his mighty sceptre ;
Then venture willfully to wield what is
So laden with omnipotence, a turn,
The slightest, from its flashing rectitude,
Frights planets in their courses, and a wrench
In human governance springs a rebound
That fells the puny wielders to the damned.

SECOND ASSESSOR.

See there : she comes, she comes.

FIRST ASSESSOR.

A burst of light !

At such approach should not this darkness flee,
Evanishing like gloom before the dawn ?

Enter the MAID ; on either side of her, brothers ISAMBART and MARTIN ; soldiers following.

Bishops sink out of sight : be seen no more !

MAID.

O Rouen, Rouen ! must I die then here ?

ISAMBART.

No : thou shalt not : thou wilt not, can'st not die.
There is no death. Thou art brought here to be
Released from earth, in one strong moment's pang.

MAID.

Thou say'st aright : 'tis so : thou say'st aright.

ISAMBART.

The earth is dark, but heaven is alight
With love, that angels may behold and cheer,
Then greet and welcome thee.

Enter hurriedly OYSELEUR, and throws himself at her feet.

OYSELEUR.

Thou injured one !
Forgive, forgive me, oh, forgive me, angel !
False, false, I've been to thee. Canst pardon me
My perfidy, my base deceit ?

MAID.

Rise up,
False Oyseleur. Hast thou washed deep thy heart
In warm repentance?

OYSELEUR.

Oh, I have, I have.

MAID.

Then go in peace: God will forgive thee, too.

[A SOLDIER *seizes* OYSELEUR.

SOLDIER.

Away, begone!

[*Thrusts* OYSELEUR *out.*

BEAUVAIS.

Joan, it is not yet too late.
Confess here, publicly, thy voices were
From demons, and thou shalt not mount the pile.

MAID.

I cannot say what is not. I believe, —
Nay, nay, I know my voices were from God.
Angels hover incessant near to us,
Peopling corporeal air with spiritual life.

Heaven enfolds the earth : from birth till death
We're breathed on by the breath of viewless friends,
Whose eyes caress us with benignant smiles.
The world of spirits and the world of man
Are one, held soul to soul by mutual links.
Not one here, — no, not one, — but over him
Hang angels, ready, at his cordial will,
To aid him cleanse his soul : the channel this
Of the Almighty's prescient ministry.
Now, Heavenly Father, give me strength. And ye,
My brothers, help me with your prayers.

[She ascends the pile, accompanied by brother MARTIN.]

A VOICE (*from the judges' platform*).

Executioner, do your duty.

[The executioner ties her to the stake, and then descends and lights the fire.]

MAID.

Bishop of Beauvais, this day's work is thine.
Thee I forgive : may God : man never will.

[The BISHOP covers his face with his hands, in agony. The flame and smoke rise, brother MARTIN still on his knees beside her.]

MAID.

Go down, go down, good brother.

[He slowly descends.]

FIRST ASSESSOR.

How terrible, how damnable, but how
 Sublime is this dread sight. Think that you saw
 The risen sun quick quenched in howling darkness.

MAID (*behind the smoke, with piercing cry*).

Jesus! Jesus!

An English KNIGHT rushes from the crowd, with hands uplifted.

KNIGHT.

We're lost, we're lost! Doomed, doomed! We've
 burnt a saint!

We shall be driven out of France — driven out.

*[Above the smoke the MAID is seen to ascend, stretching out
 her hands in attitude of blessing. Angels just over her.*

See there, see: for the death we give to her,
 She gives to us the life of her high blessing,

[Falls on his knees.

As she ascends to her great place in heaven.

*[Others similarly touched, fall on their knees, some prostrate,
 exclaiming, —*

O God! have mercy on us! mercy, mercy!

[The curtain falls.]







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